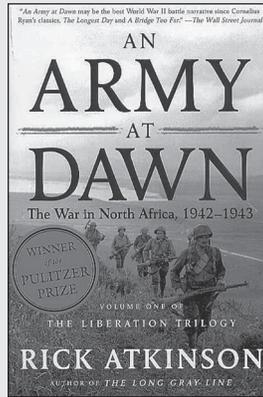


# Book Review



*An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa, 1942-1943*, by Rick Atkinson, Henry Holt and Company, LLC: New York, 2002, 704 pages, ISBN: 0-8050-6288-2, \$30 (hardcover).



*An Army at Dawn* concerns America's initial involvement in World War II. Mr. Atkinson covers the coming of age of the U.S. armed forces and their leaders, to include many details—personal and political. No punches are pulled in the rivalry between British and American forces or their leadership. Names like Eisenhower, Patton, Bradley, Montgomery, Rommel, and Clark come to the forefront and remain there until the defeat of the Axis powers in Europe.

The Tunisian campaign, Atkinson shows, was undertaken by an American Army lacking in training and experience, alongside a British army whose primary experience had been of defeat. Green units panicked, abandoning the wounded and weapons. The author points out the numerous strategic and tactical errors made on the various battlefields. Mistakes were made not only by the generals but also by people in charge at lower levels. This included very basic errors, such as not sending out reconnaissance units or initiating tank attacks without proper artillery or air support. Many brave men were sent to their deaths in useless and ill-conceived actions. Sometimes, just the sheer confusion of the battlefield was responsible or just plain error, such as artillery falling short or planes bombing their own personnel. So, you see, this was where the Americans learned to fight the war.

As the first book in a trilogy, I can hardly wait for the next volume. Don't let the size of this book intimidate you; it is a fantastic account of a little-documented phase of America's entrance into World War II. 

*This book review is provided by Mr. Jeffrey L. Rosemann, an instructional systems specialist with the Officers Education Branch, Department of Training Development, United States Army Engineer School. A retired infantry Soldier, Mr. Rosemann also served as the 2d Infantry Division historian during the beginning of the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War.*